

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01129 191322Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----191325Z 084732 /44

P 191055Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9941
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L G A O B O R O N E 1129

EXDIS

MAPUTO FOR YOUNG DELEGATION

VIENNA FOR VP PARTY

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR RH UK ZA
SUBJECT: BRITISH OFFER OF RHODESIAN ASSESSMENT TO ZAMBIANS

1. THE CALLAGHAN LETTER TO KAUNDA CONTAINED A PROMISE TO
PROVIDE A UK ASSESSMENT OF THE RHODESIAN MILITARY
THREAT. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER MILES IN LUSAKA
RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS EARLY IN THE WEEK TO REQUEST A MEETING
WITH KAUNDA IN ORDER TO PASS ON TO HIM ORALLY THIS ASSESSMENT.
THE ASSESSMENT WHICH HE SHOWED ME:

--REVIEWS THE STEPS WHICH LED TO OWEN'S LETTER TO KAUNDA
ON THE RHODESIAN WARNING OF A POSSIBLE ATTACK;

--STATES THAT THE UK IS UNAWARE OF ANY MILITARY
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BUILDUP BUT NOTES THAT THE PRESSURES ON SMITH ARE SUCH
THAT IF ATTACKED BY ZAPU HE WOULD BE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE
FROM HIS MILITARY TO RESPOND;

--REPEATS OWEN'S ASSURANCE THAT HE IS NOT REQUESTING
AND END TO THE FIGHTING AT THIS STAGE;

--NOTES THAT THE BRITISH HAVE MADE CLEAR TO SMITH THAT AN ESCALATION OF THE WARFARE WOULD DAMAGE THE NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY.

2. ALTHOUGH MILES ASKED TO SEE THE PRESIDENT EARLY IN THE WEEK, NO MEETING HAS YET BEEN SCHEDULED. IN THE MEANTIME, I HAVE EXPRESSED TO BOTH MILES AND GRAHAM MY CONCERN THAT, IN HIS PRESENT MOOD, KAUNDA MIGHT REACT NEGATIVELY TO A MESSAGE FROM THEM INDICATING THAT THE RHODESIANS WOULD ATTACK IF PROVOKED. AFTER LAST WEEK'S FLAP OVER OWEN'S PASSING ON SMITH'S WARNING, KAUNDA MIGHT WELL INTERPRET SUCH NEW INFORMATION AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE BRITISH ACTING AS A SMITH EMISSARY. FURTHERMORE, I UNDERSTAND THE ZAMBIANS HAVE INFORMATION THERE HAS BEEN A RHODESIAN BUILDUP WHICH MAY ALSO CAUSE KAUNDA TO DISCREDIT THE BRITISH INFORMATION.

3. IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT MILES WILL GET HIS APPOINTMENT TO SEE KAUNDA. I BELIEVE HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE SENSITIVITY OF THE ISSUE AND WILL TAKE CARE TO AVOID ADDING TO KAUNDA'S UNHAPPINESS WITH OWEN. HE WILL PROBABLY NOT PRESS FURTHER FOR THE MEETING I CONSIDERED THE INCIDENT CLOSED WITH KAUNDA'S MONDAY PRESS CONFERENCE. IT WOULD BE BETTER OFF REMAINING SO. HOWEVER, THE BRITISH FEEL THEY HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO FOLLOW UP ON CALLAGHAN'S PROMISE. I DO NOT BELIEVE WE CAN DO ANYTHING MORE ABOUT IT, BUT THE SITUATION REINFORCES MY VIEW THAT A VISIT BY AMBASSADOR YOUNG TO LUSAKA CAN STRENGTHEN CONSULTATIVE GROUP EFFORTS AND

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HELP BRIDGE THE CURRENT BAD STATE OF
BRITISH-ZAMBIAN RELATIONS.
NORLAND

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, INVASIONS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977GABORO01129
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770178-0730
Format: TEL
From: GABORONE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770540/aaaabinb.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ab405e90-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2458095
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRITISH OFFER OF RHODESIAN ASSESSMENT TO ZAMBIANS
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, RH, UK, ZA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ab405e90-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009